

The Philanthropin in Frankfurt

ITS EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR GERMAN JEWRY

BY ARTHUR GALLINER

Introduction

ON February 5th, 1955 a group of former teachers, pupils and friends of the Philanthropin in Frankfurt on the Main met in London to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the establishment of this notable Jewish school. Leo Baeck wrote to the Chairman expressing his pleasure that the occasion was being remembered. 'The Philanthropin', he said, 'cannot be left out of any consideration of the history of the struggle for creating a new world. What this school was and tried to do belongs not only to Frankfurt, nor even to German Jewry alone; it belongs to the whole Jewish people.'

The Philanthropin was started as part of the general move towards better higher education among the German Jews at the end of the 18th century. A new outlook on life, a new *Weltanschauung* had emerged under the influence of the Leibnitz-Wolff philosophy. People began to differentiate in religion between the essential and the non-essential, to lay stress not so much on dogma and rites but on common humanity and morality. Mendelssohn was the symbol of this era. He was in belief and practice a strictly conforming Jew, yet he was an outstanding figure in the philosophy of Enlightenment, and the man who gave the impulse to the movement for modern secular education among Jews.

The old rabbis considered this movement a danger to the Jewish traditional way of life; they denounced it, and banned Mendelssohn's translation of the Bible. But the young people welcomed the new trend. Secular periodicals like *Meassef* ('The Collector') appeared in Germany in Hebrew; societies for spreading enlightenment through modern culture sprang into existence; schools were established, like the *Jüdische Frei-Schule* in Berlin, founded in 1778, the *Wilhelmschule* in Breslau, in 1791, the *Franz-Schule* in Dessau, in 1799, the *Jacobson Schule* in Seesen, in 1801, and many others. These were elementary schools. There was a demand for a higher standard of education. Frankfurt had a famous Talmudic High School, but there were many people who wanted modern education. In spite of the opposition of the Frankfurt Rabbi, Pinchas Horowitz, Mendelssohn's translation of the Pentateuch obtained 57 subscribers in Frankfurt, and *Meassef* had eleven subscribers there. Many wealthy Jews engaged private teachers to instruct their children in general subjects, German, French, arithmetic, as for instance Jacob Sachs in the home of Jacob Baruch, Börne's father, and

Michael Hess in Meyer Amschel Rothschild's home. In 1794 several members of the Community met to arrange for a teacher to organise a school for educating their children in modern subjects. There was immediate opposition by other members of the Frankfurt Community, and Rabbi Pinchas Horowitz, a great Talmudist from Poland, who could hardly speak German, banned the proposed school. But the Senate induced him to withdraw the ban. Nevertheless, the school never came into existence. The idea may have been dropped because of the French war. Yet the movement was not to be stopped. The desire for modern education was too strong among the Jews of Frankfurt. In 1789–1799 there were already six Jewish pupils attending the City Grammar School (*Städtisches Gymnasium*) and in 1800–1803 there were 29. In 1803 there were 22 Jewish children, nearly a quarter of the total enrolment, at the *Musterschule* founded that year. The rich could provide their children with a good secular education. But there were no higher schools for the poor. That was the situation which brought about the establishment of the Philanthropin.

The Philanthropin

The story of the Philanthropin opens with an act of charity, of philanthropy. In December 1803 Meyer Amschel Rothschild, the Frankfurt founder of the House of Rothschild, was attracted by a wandering Jewish lad who went about the country singing Hebrew songs. He took him to Frankfurt, and placed him in the care of his bookkeeper, Siegmund Geisenheimer, who was then 28. Geisenheimer, who was born in 1775 in the ghetto of Bingen on the Rhine had, under the influence of Mendelssohn's writings, and of the idea of tolerance expounded in Lessing's 'Nathan', taught himself German. He entered the Rothschild Bank when he was 19. Whatever leisure he had he spent in acquiring further education.

Rothschild's action in entrusting this boy to his care fired Geisenheimer's enthusiasm. He planned a three year course of education for him, and then decided to include several other orphan children in his scheme. Reluctant to be dependent on Rothschild, he and three like-minded young men issued an appeal for subscriptions to establish a school for poor Jewish children, and 'to develop this school into an institution of higher learning.' The appeal was more successful than the initiators had expected. In January 1804 two orphan children were receiving education; the following year there were 16. The number of pupils increased steadily, particularly when it was decided also to admit children whose parents could pay the school fees. These were 60 fl. a year, a fairly large sum, which made it possible to admit more non-paying pupils.

At first instruction was given at the new *Musterschule* in general subjects, German, French, arithmetic, history, geography, and the like, and a special Jewish teacher was engaged to teach religion, Hebrew and writing.

Two hours a day were devoted to reading the Bible in the original and translating it into German, using Mendelssohn's translation. The pupils were also taught Hebrew grammar, and when they were more advanced the Bible commentaries, Rashi and Biur. The children had seats in the synagogue, where they behaved in an exemplary manner.

The first public examination was held in 1805, in the presence of some of the leading educationists in Frankfurt, including the Deputy Director of the Grammar School, a deeply religious man with a great respect for religious Jews. He spoke in terms of high praise of the way in which the German language was being taught at the school — 'so thoroughly', he said, 'that I wish it were done as well in many of our own schools.'

The next step was to make the Philanthropin independent of the *Musterschule*, so that all the teaching would be carried on in the same building. Teachers were engaged for general subjects, and accommodation was obtained for two classes in the Schaeferstrasse, outside the Jewish quarter, the *Judengasse*. The second public examination, in January 1806, was attended by representatives of the City Senate and of the Jewish Community, as well as the leading educational authorities. The Jewish Philanthropin School now seemed firmly established.

What did this mean in a town like Frankfurt, where the *Stättigkeit* of 1616 was still law, forbidding Jews to walk in the avenues and promenades, and giving every young lout the right to force any Jew he met in the street to take off his hat, by shouting at him: '*Mach Mores, Jud!*' Now there was a Jewish school situated outside the *Judengasse*, which had the support and encouragement of some of the most influential leaders of the city's public life.

The Grand Duchy of Frankfurt

The upheaval of the time brought great changes to Frankfurt, and also to its Jews and to the Philanthropin. Frankfurt, the old *Freie Reichsstadt*, became a Duchy under Napoleonic protection. The Duke, Prince-Bishop Carl Theodor von Dalberg, Archbishop of Mainz, was a cultured man, tolerant and broadminded, open to modern ideas, and in touch with men like Goethe and Wilhelm von Humboldt. He proclaimed his intention, in accordance with the principles of the French Revolution and the ideas of the era of Enlightenment, to make education available to all, to promote religious tolerance, and to bring peace to all, especially to those who like the Jews had suffered so much from intolerance. He gave Jews the right to use the avenues and public promenades, and assured them of his protection against insult and discrimination. He repealed the *Stättigkeit* of 1616, and replaced it with the new *Stättigkeit* of 1807, which gave greater liberty to the Jews, though still not equally with the Christian citizens.

Jews were now allowed to become craftsmen and to work at their craft. Geisenheimer made good use of this new opportunity. He immediately

organised a class for training Jewish boys as artisans, and tried to get as many as possible to join the class.

In accordance with the new *Stättigkeit* the administration of the Jewish Community had to be reorganised. A special Education Department was set up. Its first task was to report on the four existing Jewish schools, — Maas, Levy, Sachs, and the Philanthropin — and to make recommendations for their improvement.

None of the four schools satisfied modern requirements. It was therefore proposed that a new big school, the 'General School of the Jewish Community', should be built. It was to be named the *Carls-Schule*, to honour Duke Carl von Dalberg. The Jewish Community was to be in complete control of the administration and running of the school. An ambitious scheme was drawn up for it, setting out in detail the subjects to be taught, the accommodation and the equipment required, especially for Chemistry and Physics.

The Duke gave his approval to the scheme, but it needed much more money than was available. A subscription was started but was not very successful, and when Jacob Süsskind Stern, the chief promoter of the scheme, died in 1811, it was dropped. Had the plan succeeded it would have involved the end of the Philanthropin.

The Philanthropin had been quietly continuing its work all the time. In January 1810 it had opened a new department for girls, intended to concentrate on training them for their future duties as wives and mothers, with special emphasis on domestic duties and needlework. By the end of the year 61 girls were attending the Philanthropin.

Another great political change followed, which affected the fortunes of the Jews. The Grand Duchy of Frankfurt received a new Constitution, officially promulgated on December 25th, 1811, giving equality to all inhabitants. The Jews of Frankfurt, in consideration of their discharging certain obligations, were declared to 'have now the same civic rights and privileges as the Christian population.'

Geisenheimer wrote about it to his father: 'The day of the proclamation was a day of rejoicing for the Jews, who thanked God for this blessing.' Michael Hess, the headmaster of the Philanthropin, told the parents that it was their duty to help the school to enable the young generation to take full advantage of the new favourable conditions.

The new Education Act of 1812 gave a further stimulus to the development of the Philanthropin. It provided for the establishment of three types of schools: Denominational schools for the three denominations, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish; a non-denominational Teachers' Training Seminary; non-denominational *Realschulen*.

The Philanthropin did not fit into any of the three categories. But Dr. Oppenheimer, a member of the Schools Committee, set out in a Report the position of the Philanthropin, which was the only public school for the

education of Jewish youth, and was now admitting Christian pupils as well. The enrolment had increased in six years from 22 to 220, showing the Jewish population's keen interest in education. He urged the State to support this excellent aspiration. Dr. Oppenheimer proposed that the Philanthropin should be recognised as a *Realschule*, with the lower classes as a primary school. This, he said, would satisfy the requirements of the Education Act, and would guarantee the future of the school. After the authorities by holding examinations had satisfied themselves of the standard of teaching, Dr. Oppenheimer's proposals were accepted, and a new teaching plan, drawn up by Michael Hess, was agreed upon.

The school, now called *Bürger- und Realschule für die Israelitische Gemeinde Frankfurt am Main* was officially opened on August 13th, 1813. Geisenheimer continued to serve as one of the members of the school's new Committee of Management. Michael Hess was the headmaster, and the teaching staff were now employees of the State. This recognition of the Jewish school on the same level as the schools of the Christian denominations was most important in the history of Jewish education in Germany.

Frankfurt again a Free City

Geisenheimer and his friends had reason to be satisfied with the progress of their school, which had started with one boy and was now a state-recognised educational institution with 280 pupils: 153 boys and 127 girls. The official recognition carried with it the right to use the Arms of the Grand Duke on the school seal.

But with Napoleon's defeat the Grand Duchy of Frankfurt went out of existence. Frankfurt reverted to its former status as a Free City. The new liberties, Jewish equality, were partly withdrawn, and the financial grants to the Philanthropin were cut considerably. The school found itself in difficulties. An appeal was issued for subscriptions and a number of economies were enforced to keep the expenditure down. In 1819 the Administration of the Community granted a considerable subsidy, but without obligation to continue it. The subsidy was legalised in 1843, by an amendment of the 1822 Law regulating the affairs of the Jewish school. Under this amendment the Jewish Community of Frankfurt was required to cover the school's deficit. In return the school management committee had to concede certain rights to the Community, including a number of seats on the Committee.

Even so, the school management committee remained on the whole an independent authority, subject to the supervision of the Schools Commission of the Free City of Frankfurt, whose liaison officer for many years, State Commissioner Ihm, was a man who had great understanding and good-will for the school. In his Report for 1826 he spoke of it in the highest terms. The examinations which had just been held had left on him, he said, 'a deep and pleasant impression.' He was full of praise of the religious

and moral instructions, and the *Andachtsstunde*, the Devotional Hour. 'These achievements', he went on, 'fill me with admiration and respect, and I consider it my duty to say so.'

The position of the school and its relations with the Jewish Community and the authorities of the Free City remained essentially the same till 1866, when Frankfurt became a Prussian town.

During the first years of its existence, the Philanthropin had been associated with the *Musterschule*. The pupils had shared lessons and teachers. But the management committee wanted the school to become completely independent. This aim was greatly furthered when Geisenheimer in 1807 was able to secure the services of Dr. Franz Joseph Molitor, a young non-Jewish scholar of liberal views, to take charge of the school jointly with Michael Hess. The two men remained responsible for running the school for a number of years.

Dr. Molitor, who was 28 at the time of his appointment, was influenced by Schlegel, Schelling and Baader. He wrote a good deal on religious philosophy, and he was interested in Judaism. He had met Geisenheimer at the Freemason Lodge '*Zur aufgehenden Morgenröte*' which Geisenheimer had founded in the same year. He believed that he had found in the Philanthropin an ideal means of advancing tolerance and good-will and spreading enlightenment. He was known in liberal intellectual circles. Bettina von Arnim-Brentano, who called herself a Patron of the Philanthropin, told Goethe about Molitor and sent him some of his writings. Goethe was interested, and wrote to her: 'If the man will act as reasonably as he writes, he must do much good.'

Molitor did indeed do much good at the Philanthropin, where he taught ethics, natural history, geography and history. Michael Hess and Molitor worked together wonderfully. It is remarkable how these two men from different backgrounds found a common understanding and a common purpose in this Jewish school. Both were contributors to important periodicals — Molitor to the international magazine *European State Relations*, and Hess to the Jewish magazine *Shulamith*. Thus the Jewish and the universalist points of view worked together in the Philanthropin from this early stage in the school's history.

Dr. Molitor had many other interests besides the Philanthropin, which made him resign the joint headmastership in 1809, but he continued to teach at the school till 1828. Dr. Michael Hess remained headmaster.

Michael Hess

Michael Hess, born in 1782 at Stadtlengfeld, in Thuringia, began as a pupil of the famous Talmudic school in Fürth. He came under the influence of Moses Mendelssohn's writings which, as he afterwards said, opened a new world to him. It gave him a powerful impulse to acquire a

good knowledge of German, German literature, and mathematics. He studied the writings on pedagogy, from Basedow to Pestalozzi, and decided to become a teacher. He came to Frankfurt in 1804, and Meyer Amschel Rothschild engaged him as tutor to his youngest son Jacob, later Baron James de Rothschild (1792–1868). Two years later, when he was 24, he was appointed head-teacher at the Philanthropin.

Keenly interested in education, and always adding to his own knowledge by constant reading, he kept abreast of the latest developments in educational theory, always introducing new methods and new subjects. He established the girls' school, and started a kindergarten on Froebel lines. He also introduced physical training. For half a century he was the leader and director of the Philanthropin School.

The general teaching was much the same as in other schools, educating the pupils in mind and soul, and preparing them for practical life, especially for commercial careers. But special attention was given to religious instruction. Many hours each week were devoted to teaching Jewish religion and Hebrew. The Hebrew lessons aimed at enabling the pupils to understand the Bible in the original text, through regular reading and grammatical exposition. It embraced the Pentateuch, Joshua and other historical books, Isaiah and selected parts of the other Prophets, the Psalms, all with the Hebrew commentaries, and using Mendelssohn's translation. The main parts of the prayer-book were read and translated. This also applied to the girls' school. There was indeed a very wide field of Hebrew instruction, with the teaching of religious ritual and the Jewish religious duties. On Sunday mornings, when the school opened, all the pupils, boys and girls, assembled in the hall, and after singing accompanied by the organ, an address was delivered on a religious-moral subject.

In 1813 Joseph Johlson was appointed teacher of religion. He tried to make the hour of devotion more impressive by having it on the Sabbath, instead of Sunday, and using for the most part the traditional Sabbath service. But his proposal for a prayer-book with Hebrew and German prayers, a weekly reading from the *Torah* with translations, and an address in German, was turned down, though it had the approval of Chief Rabbi Hirsh Horowitz.

Twenty-five years had passed since the French Revolution, and there was a new generation, many of whom had given up strict Jewish observance. But the synagogues had not changed. Many young people rebelled against the old order which still obtained there. The Philanthropin tried to capture their interest by introducing a new service with a German sermon. Pupils and staff were required to be present for the devotional hour. From the start a growing number of parents also attended these services. They provided something German Jews had not had before — the use of their vernacular, German, in the prayers, the German sermon, and the combined

hymn singing. The women, in particular, were much attracted to these services.

In 1828, Dr. Michael Creizenach was appointed to teach at the school, and he made the services his special care. They now attracted so many people, not only parents but also outside adult members of the Community, that a special hall, the *Andachtssaal* (Devotion Hall), was built that year to accommodate them. The services were now held regularly also on the festivals, though not till 1843 on the Day of Atonement.

Another innovation was the annual confirmation of boys in the Devotion Hall. This was always attended by many members of the Frankfurt Community. The last confirmation in the school was held in 1858. After that date it was transferred to the synagogue.

The new form of service conducted at the Philanthropin interested many young Jewish rabbinical scholars all over the country, and the school's influence extended far beyond Frankfurt. Among those who came to preach there were Dr. Nathan Marcus Adler, later Chief Rabbi in London, Abraham Geiger, Michael Hess's brother, Dr. Mendel Hess, the Communal Rabbi of Stadtlengfeld, Leopold Stein, later rabbi in Frankfurt, reform leader David Einhorn, Dr. Formstecher and others.

With Dr. Stein's appointment in 1864 to the newly-built *Hauptsynagoge* in Frankfurt, where the service was more modern, there was no further need of the special services at the Philanthropin; yet the tradition lingered, and these services continued for another ten years. In 1888, the group of buildings which had housed the Philanthropin, was disposed of to the Catholic Community.

Michael Hess's activities went much further than the school. He was interested in all Jewish affairs; he played a considerable part in the struggle for Jewish emancipation and equal rights. He published two pamphlets: one answering an attack by Professor Ruehs on the Jewish claim to emancipation, the other an answer to a similar attack by Dr. Paulus.

Hess's leadership and the work of his colleagues made the Philanthropin the most important Jewish school in Germany. Its pupils came from all parts of the country, and visitors to Germany who were interested in Jewish life made a point of seeing the school at work. One such visitor was the French-Jewish statesman Adolphe Cremieux, on his way back from the East, where he had intervened with Sir Moses Montefiore and Salomon Munk in the Damascus Blood Libel Affair.

Hess was essentially a man of the Enlightenment. His highest aim was education and humanity, and he tried to educate his pupils to be God-fearing and morally good human beings. He was ardent and outspoken in his advocacy of Reform, with the result that some parents were offended, and withdrew their children to send them to the new Orthodox Grammar School established by Samson Raphael Hirsch, or to non-Jewish schools. Yet the Philanthropin remained the outstanding Jewish school.

I. M. Jost

Besides Michael Hess there were three men who had contributed much to the prestige which the Philanthropin enjoyed; they were Joseph Juhlson, Michael Creizenach and the historian Isaac Marcus Jost.

Jost (1793–1860) played an outstanding part in the wider life of German Jewry, far beyond the scope of the Philanthropin, and it was a matter of pride for the school to have him associated with it. Jost's fellow-pupil at the Samson School in Wolfenbüttel was Leopold Zunz, who was to become the founder of the modern *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Before coming to the Philanthropin he had from 1816 to 1835 conducted a Jewish private school in Berlin. When in 1835 Jost was appointed to the Philanthropin he was 42. He had already published his *History of the Jews since Maccabean Times* in nine volumes (1820–28) and the *History of the People of Israel* (1832). His *New History of the People of Israel* and the *History of Judaism and its Sects* were written while he was at the school. The teachers at the Philanthropin had a tradition of not limiting themselves to the school work. Like Hess and Molitor, Jost took an active part in the struggle for political rights for the Jews in Germany. He also founded the *Israelitische Frauen-Verein* (Jewish Women's Society), and through it established an orphanage for girls.

Jacob Auerbach, a cousin of the novelist Berthold Auerbach, was another teacher at the Philanthropin. Born in Emmendingen, in 1810, he had studied Jewish theology, philosophy, and German literature and pedagogy at Heidelberg. Having been assistant to the rabbi of Wiesbaden for 7 years, he was appointed to the Philanthropin when he was 33. He was in charge of religious teaching; his *Short School* and *Home Bible* and his *Bible Tales* for the Jewish Youth became text books in many Jewish schools. Auerbach was also a contributor to Geiger's *Zeitschrift*. In the school he served as a link between Michael Hess and Dr. Sigismund Stern, who succeeded as headmaster in 1855, when Hess retired.

The Stern Era

Michael Hess and his colleagues were largely men of the 18th century; Dr. Sigismund Stern belonged to the 19th century. He was born in 1812 in Karge, a small town in Posen. His father taught him Talmud, and a private teacher instructed him in general elementary subjects. At Berlin University he studied philosophy and philology under scholars like Hegel, Schleiermacher, Beneke, Karl Ritter. When Jost went to the Philanthropin in 1835, Dr. Stern took over his private school in Berlin and ran it for ten years, till he was appointed to the Philanthropin. In Berlin he had been a foremost advocate of Reform, and his lectures there on 'The Task of Judaism and its Followers' led to the foundation of the *Berliner Reformgemeinde* (Berlin Reform Congregation). He was the founder and spiritual leader of this

Congregation, its preacher and teacher. When the Philanthropin asked him to succeed Hess he was already widely known. His appointment was warmly supported by Berthold Auerbach, Gabriel Riesser, Abraham Geiger and Dr. Moritz Veit.

When Sigmund Stern was at Berlin University, pedagogic activity was at its height. There he had imbibed the ideas of Goethe, Schiller, Lessing, Herder and others, the apostles of the new Humanism. When he came to the Philanthropin it was with a high reputation as a teacher and a Jewish religious reformer. He found a school that was indeed sectarian, but had no wish to remain so. He regarded his predecessor, Michael Hess, as the outstanding man in the Jewish educational field, the champion of progress and enlightenment and justice. He spoke of the special mission of the Philanthropin, founded for 'enlightenment and humanity', to 'combine theoretical and practical education, the ideal and the real, the inherited Jewish religion and the culture of the German Fatherland, to contribute towards dispelling wrong and suffering, and increasing the good on earth.'

Thus the school was to raise the standard of education and culture in the Jewish community as a whole, directing it towards the goal of a common humanity. Though the majority of the pupils were Jewish, and the school had and would continue to have a tradition as a Jewish denominational teaching institution, it must also take its place as a German school, imbued with German spirit and culture, and equal in achievement to all other German schools of the same kind.

Dr. Stern had another problem — the existence in Frankfurt of the rival orthodox Jewish *Realschule*. In one way it presented a tempting opportunity to develop the Philanthropin on liberal lines, as an institution of Reform Judaism. But that course held dangers. The Philanthropin was a school of the older community, the *Hauptgemeinde* or *Einheitsgemeinde*, which united Jews of different shades of religious belief and practice; it could therefore not become the school of only one section, or its whole existence would be jeopardised. Broadminded tolerance was needed to keep clear of the rocks. And broadminded tolerance remained the way of the Philanthropin.

Dr. Stern realised that the special character of the school he had come to Frankfurt to direct, would have to be maintained. At the same time he knew that a school must undergo changes in the course of time. It had come into existence as part of the movement among the German Jews of the late 18th and early 19th century towards a wider general education. Now, 'in accordance with the development of the time and the needs of those for whom it was founded, the Jewish Philanthropin must become a *Realschule* of the Jewish Community.'

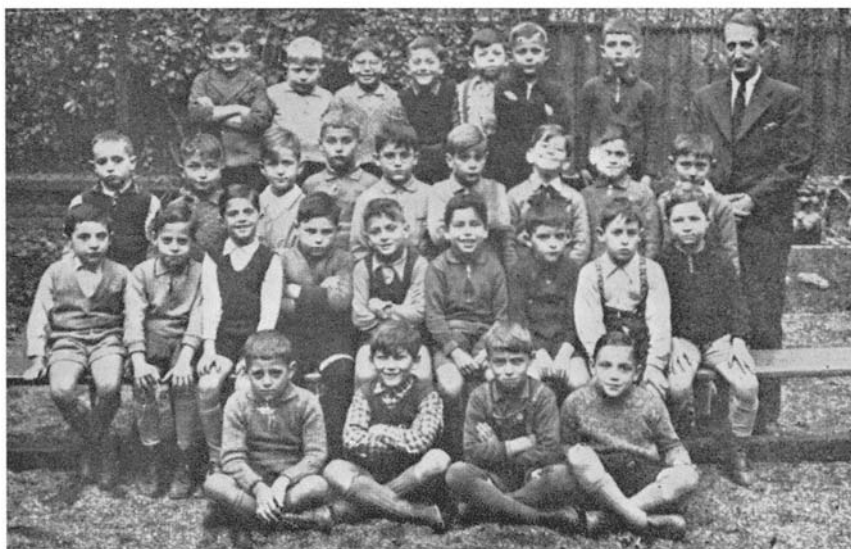
The change of name is important. As the name implies, the Philanthropin was in its first phase mainly a charity school for the poor and for people of small means. The *Volks- und Bürgerschule*, which it became later,



Dr. Siegmund Stern
Headmaster 1855—1867.



Otto Driesen, the last Headmaster 1921—1937.



The last class of the Philanthropin

This photograph was taken in the spring of 1938. Shortly thereafter the school was closed by the Nazis, the pupils scattered and the teacher, Dr. Alfred Speier, sent to a concentration camp, from which he never returned. —

By courtesy of Yivo Archives.

of the work the Philanthropin had set out to do and was doing. It was a general German school, denominational in so far as it was a school supported and mainly maintained by the Jewish Community, which it had to serve in the first place. It taught Hebrew and biblical and post-biblical history and gave Jewish religious instruction in the same way as state and city required for the teaching of Christian religion in the schools which they maintained. But it would have been contrary to the spirit which animated Geisenheimer and his colleagues if all the teaching at the school had been denominational in approach and character. From the beginning there had been Christian children at the school and Christian teachers, both Protestant and Catholic, men and women. Stern set himself now to reorganise and modernise the entire management of the school. He did away with corporal punishment and based education on child psychology. He introduced the institution of the form-master (*Klassenlehrer*) responsible for his own form. New subjects — modern science, electricity, magnetism, chemistry — were introduced. There was little difference in general methods and plans of teaching between the Philanthropin and other similar schools like the *Musterschule*, except that the *Musterschule* gave only twelve hours a week to religion, while the Philanthropin gave 30 hours to Hebrew and religion.

When Stern took office as the head of the Philanthropin he described his aims as follows: to teach understanding and acceptance of the religious rules and regulations, instruction in Judaism, to lay the foundation of a moral life, knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and of the development of Judaism, realisation of its historical significance for the present and awareness of its enduring bond with the great past. Morality was to be the aim of religious teaching.

But a few years later he declared: Religion as a subject of education must have a positive content. Positive religion is the perception of the divine truth and of the human duties arising from it, so that the child would understand his religion which his forefathers had cherished and passed on to him. The religion of the fathers should always, he said, be felt as the oldest and purest source of the truth, from which in time all mankind will draw its blessings.

His attitude to the teaching of Hebrew became more positive. At first he had thought it unnecessary to teach Hebrew, because a good translation would be adequate. But later on he declared that the purpose of instruction must be to enable the pupils to read and understand the most important parts of the Bible and the prayer-book in the original. He considered the study of Hebrew of great educational value.

In this he had the strong support of two of his colleagues, Jacob Auerbach and Lazarus Geiger. Lazarus Geiger was Abraham Geiger's nephew and had learned Hebrew from a very early age. He had studied classical philology at the Universities of Marburg, Heidelberg and Bonn, and then

also accepted children from wealthy homes. Now the *Bürger- und Real-schule* drew its pupils mainly from the well-to-do.

The change of name necessitated also a change of aim. The original aim had been set by the political and social, as well as the religious conditions in which the Jews of Frankfurt lived at that time. The school was intended to raise the level of general education among the Jews of Frankfurt at the beginning of the 19th century, in order to enable them to claim equal rights. There was a second purpose — to advance religious reform among the Jews, by the introduction of innovations like the devotional hour and the confirmation.

Both these aims had in essence been attained by the time Dr. Sigismund Stern took over. The level of education in Frankfurt and throughout Germany was about the same for Jews and Christians. Religious reform had by this time established itself, and was acknowledged by the Board of the Community and its rabbis. So the school's problem was solved. As Dr. Stern repeatedly emphasised, the school had never subordinated its educational purpose to any party.

We can imagine what it meant to Stern, who had stood for ten years in the centre of the Reform movement. But he realised that if he made the school an institution and an instrument of extreme reform, it would rock its foundations. The school could keep going only on the broad basis of serving the educational purposes of the Jewish Community as a whole. And he did believe in maintaining the main community as a united community. As for the school, its Jewish character was ensured by the teaching of Bible and Hebrew.

At the same time, Stern did not consider the school Jewish in a sectarian sense, as a Christian denominational school is sectarian, so that all its teaching would have to be imbued with a specific Jewish spirit. 'We are rather of the opinion', he said, 'that all teaching not directly concerned with religion is intended to further general human and German patriotic education. Books and text-books of a definite Christian denominational character must be kept out of our school. But that does not mean that we cannot employ Christian teachers or admit Christian pupils for fear that the school would lose its Jewish character. They would not, of course, join us in our specific Jewish subjects, and we could not offer them the opportunity of Christian religious instruction in our school.'

This did not satisfy many of the parents, especially those who had come to Frankfurt from the Provinces, and who — imbued with the spirit of the time — wanted more intercourse with the Christian population. To them the school appeared to be a Jewish denominational school, run by the Jewish Community, and therefore out of date and out of touch with the modern spirit. They did not send their children to the Philanthropin, but to general schools.

Those who thought so, missed the true purpose and the real importance

of the work the Philanthropin had set out to do and was doing. It was a general German school, denominational in so far as it was a school supported and mainly maintained by the Jewish Community, which it had to serve in the first place. It taught Hebrew and biblical and post-biblical history and gave Jewish religious instruction in the same way as state and city required for the teaching of Christian religion in the schools which they maintained. But it would have been contrary to the spirit which animated Geisenheimer and his colleagues if all the teaching at the school had been denominational in approach and character. From the beginning there had been Christian children at the school and Christian teachers, both Protestant and Catholic, men and women. Stern set himself now to reorganise and modernise the entire management of the school. He did away with corporal punishment and based education on child psychology. He introduced the institution of the form-master (*Klassenlehrer*) responsible for his own form. New subjects — modern science, electricity, magnetism, chemistry — were introduced. There was little difference in general methods and plans of teaching between the Philanthropin and other similar schools like the *Musterschule*, except that the *Musterschule* gave only twelve hours a week to religion, while the Philanthropin gave 30 hours to Hebrew and religion.

When Stern took office as the head of the Philanthropin he described his aims as follows: to teach understanding and acceptance of the religious rules and regulations, instruction in Judaism, to lay the foundation of a moral life, knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and of the development of Judaism, realisation of its historical significance for the present and awareness of its enduring bond with the great past. Morality was to be the aim of religious teaching.

But a few years later he declared: Religion as a subject of education must have a positive content. Positive religion is the perception of the divine truth and of the human duties arising from it, so that the child would understand his religion which his forefathers had cherished and passed on to him. The religion of the fathers should always, he said, be felt as the oldest and purest source of the truth, from which in time all mankind will draw its blessings.

His attitude to the teaching of Hebrew became more positive. At first he had thought it unnecessary to teach Hebrew, because a good translation would be adequate. But later on he declared that the purpose of instruction must be to enable the pupils to read and understand the most important parts of the Bible and the prayer-book in the original. He considered the study of Hebrew of great educational value.

In this he had the strong support of two of his colleagues, Jacob Auerbach and Lazarus Geiger. Lazarus Geiger was Abraham Geiger's nephew and had learned Hebrew from a very early age. He had studied classical philology at the Universities of Marburg, Heidelberg and Bonn, and then

settled in Frankfurt to pursue his philological studies. The main subject of his writings was the origin and evolution of language. Being essentially a scholar, he had not contemplated to become a teacher. Nevertheless he agreed to accept the call to succeed Jost at the Philanthropin and taught Hebrew, biblical history and German. He was very happy in his work, and his pupils loved him. A marble bust of him was placed in the entrance hall of the Frankfurt Public Library when he died.

The Philanthropin had now developed from an educational into a cultural centre. Many of its teachers did social and cultural work outside the school. Sigismund Stern himself wrote much on educational problems, anticipating a number of modern ideas, especially in individual psychology, subsequently the sphere of activity of his own grandson, Professor William Stern, of the University of Hamburg, author of the famous *Psychologie der frühen Kindheit*. He wrote many historical books, including a remarkable book on 'Karl Freiherr vom Stein, the great Prussian Statesman', a 'German History since the French Revolution', 'History of the Jews from Mendelssohn to the Present Day', a.o. Sigismund Stern gave many public lectures on German and Jewish history and religious and political questions. He was a true man of the 1848 type, but he was convinced that Judaism by self-emancipation and self-development would play an important role in the future history of mankind.

Dr. Stern was highly respected outside the Jewish Community. On the occasion of the Schiller Centenary in 1859 he was invited to be the first speaker at the Frankfurt City commemoration in the *Kaisersaal*. He eulogised the poet as a gallant fighter for freedom – political and religious freedom – and for unity – German unity and the unity of mankind. Stern was a great believer in German unity. He did not live to see its realisation in 1870, but he saw Frankfurt, the Free City, become a Prussian town.

This new development required immediate action in the interest of the school; Stern sent a detailed report on the school to the Ministry of Education in Berlin, asking for official recognition as a *Realschule zweiter Ordnung*. His request was granted, with some limitations, by the Minister of Education, von Muehler, a reactionary Minister, who had been a close friend of Stern's in his younger years, when they were members of a literary club. Their previous friendship may have helped to expedite matters. This was Stern's last success. He died in May 1867.

Hermann Baerwald and Salo Adler

Stern's two successors, Dr. Hermann Baerwald and Dr. Salo Adler, were both representatives of the new epoch, the era of the Prussian State and the German Reich. With their roots intellectually and politically in the 19th century, they were civil servants of the Prussian State.

It is typical of the new outlook that before Dr. Baerwald's appointment as Director of the school was confirmed, the representative of the Government, the *Oberpräsident*, said to him: 'You are about to take an important post in the old *Reichsstadt*. As a Prussian you will encounter certain prejudices. How do you propose to react to them? How will you gain the confidence and affection of your staff and pupils?' Baerwald's answer was: '*Primum incipere a se ipso!* I shall start with myself. I shall do my duty. I shall try to set an example.'

Baerwald was born at Nakel, in Posen, in 1828. He studied philology and history at Breslau University, where he took his doctorate in 1855. He then studied history for some years in Vienna, where he was also house tutor to Consul Moritz Ritter von Goldschmidt, who had been a pupil at the Philanthropin. His Prussian sentiments made him leave Vienna, to settle in Berlin, where he joined the teaching staff at the Berlin Jewish Community's Religion School and at the new Jewish Teachers' Training Seminary. He liked teaching, and he made many congenial intellectual friends; Eduard Lasker, the politician, was one of them. When Stern died, Lasker suggested that Baerwald should take his place. The appointment was made in March 1868.

Baerwald's task had been made much easier by Stern's initiative in getting the school recognised as a second grade *Realschule*. But there were still several hampering restrictions, which he tried to have removed. Leopold Sonnemann, the founder of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, was a member of the Imperial Parliament, the *Reichstag*, and raised the matter there, with the result that the Ministry of Education gave equal rights to Jewish and Christian schools, to Jewish and Christian pupils.

It was also necessary to transfer the control of the school from the Frankfurt City Council to the Provincial Schools Board, with which the Director now had to communicate directly in all matters concerning his school, and no longer through the *Schulrat*. The Director was also appointed Chairman of the Teachers' Conference, instead of being only a member of the *Schulrat*; it increased his authority as the Head of the School. The *Schulrat* remained the administrative link between the school and the *Vorstand* (Board) of the Jewish Community.

The introduction of the official Prussian teaching plan left little scope for special methods. The school was now under the supervision of the state authorities and had to follow the official plan, to prepare its pupils for the state examinations, like all the other schools. But the teaching of religion and Hebrew continued to hold a foremost place in the curriculum, based on the system that had been introduced by Jacob Auerbach. It aimed at teaching Jewish history, and the essence and development of Judaism, combining real religious education with an understanding and appreciation of the Jewish past. A commercial class and a handicraft class were added to train the boys for their future careers as merchants, artisans and workers.

There was also a continuation class for girls (*Selecta*), to equip them for their later duties as wives and mothers.

During Baerwald's term of office a big commemoration ceremony was held for Siegmund Geisenheimer, at which a tablet in his memory was unveiled.

On the occasion of a Mendelssohn centenary celebration Dr. Baerwald spoke to the school of Mendelssohn's undying place in German Jewry. Unlike his predecessor, Baerwald did not engage in much activity outside the school. Towards the end of Baerwald's term of office there was anxiety over the decline in the number of pupils, and the Board and Council of the Community seriously discussed closing the school, because it was becoming a heavy financial burden on the Community funds. Baerwald reacted by presenting a convincing memorandum, stressing the importance of the school for the continued life of the Jewish Community. It saved the school.

Dr. Salo Adler, who succeeded Baerwald in 1900, was also a graduate of Breslau University, where he studied history, geography and German. He had been teaching for some years at the Samson Schule in Wolfenbüttel, and in Schneidemühl, before he became Rector at the Girl's School of the Jewish Community in Berlin in 1890.

Enjoying a high reputation as an educationist, Adler founded in Berlin the Association of Jewish Teachers, in order to improve their status and provide them with further education. Full of energy he came to Frankfurt. As many of the teachers at the Philanthropin were old and had to retire, Adler appointed new, qualified young teachers, especially for modern languages, art, religion and Hebrew. A class was opened for commercial science, and a kindergarten. Shortly after Adler's accession the Philanthropin celebrated its centenary in 1904. It was a great occasion in the life of Frankfurt and of German Jewry. A centenary book was published, containing several special works written by members of the staff, notably Isidor Krakauer's *History of the Judengasse*. Krakauer was also the author of a *History of the Jews of Frankfurt*. Messages were received from former pupils and friends all over the world. Contributions were sent towards the Rebuilding Fund which had been started to mark the centenary; the Jewish Community gave it generous support.

The new building was opened in 1908. It was an imposing structure, with a big square tower dominating that part of the city, in the Hebelstrasse. The Government and the City authorities were represented at the opening which was also attended by representatives of the Jewish Community and leading educationists from other schools. The building provided adequate accommodation for the Boys' and Girls' Schools, the kindergarten, the classes for handicraft, art and science, a large gymnastics hall and a festival hall, in which hung portraits of Geisenheimer, Hess, Stern and Baerwald. A portrait of Adler was added later as well as one of Ettlinger, chairman

of the *Schulrat*, both painted by A. Galliner. There were also portraits of the Fürst Primas Dalberg, Jost and Johlson.

Adler had intended to develop the Philanthropin as a full higher secondary school (*Vollanstalt*) but the 1914 war held up these plans. Many members of the staff were called up. Towards the end of the war Adler's son, a lieutenant in the German Air Force, was killed in action. Adler died a few months later, at the beginning of 1919.

'This is the end of the Philanthropin', the President of the Frankfurt Jewish Community said. But it was not the end. A good Jewish school was needed. The non-denominational schools were still essentially Christian schools. Even at the time of the Weimar Republic Jewish teachers could hardly get appointed to these schools. Jewish teachers came to the Philanthropin from all parts of Germany, because the school gave them a unique opportunity to develop a full-scale teaching activity.

There was also a growing sense of Jewishness among German Jews, whether orthodox or conservative, liberal or reform, stimulated partly by the Zionist movement, and partly by the social, economic and political conditions developing in Germany.

Some Jews thought the age of emancipation had passed; they wanted to replace it with assimilation, and they suggested closing the Philanthropin on the ground that there was no longer any need of a separate Jewish school. But the *Schulrat* felt that the school must be maintained on its old traditional lines. They tried to find a new Director; two years after Dr. Adler's death Dr. Otto Driesen was appointed who had been warmly recommended by Rabbi Dr. Julius Galliner of Berlin. Dr. Driesen became Director of the Philanthropin in April 1921.

The Driesen Era

Dr. Otto Driesen was an extraordinary man, broadminded, and open to modern ideas. Born in 1875 in Tauberbischofsheim in Baden, he studied law, political economics, history and modern languages. In Berlin he started his career as a teacher with a demonstration-lecture on 'The Cinematograph in the Service of Science and Teaching', using records with his cinema pictures, thus, in a way, anticipating the talkies.

Dr. Driesen took up his duties in Frankfurt in 1921, at a most difficult and anxious time in Germany, economically and politically. Enthusiastic and tireless, he persisted with his plans of developing and expanding the school. He brought in young teachers to take charge of new departments.

In four years, by 1925, the *Reform-Real-Gymnasium* was ready, and the pupils could now take their *Reifeprüfung* there. It was the beginning of a new era at the Philanthropin — the old school was educating hundreds of boys and girls from the kindergarten to the university. The girls' high school was completed by opening a one year *Frauenschule* for further

education for office work, teaching, and other professions. It attracted girls from all over Germany and from abroad.

Driesen brought a community spirit into the school. He established a sports association, and he introduced the general plenary school meetings. Once a week almost the entire school assembled in the Great Hall, and discussed with him various matters affecting the work of the school and the life of the community and the city. There was always a frank and uninhibited discussion.

Meanwhile the dark clouds of Hitlerism had gathered over Germany and German Jewry. Driesen arranged a Palestine Exhibition in the Arts Hall, to interest people in the possibilities of the Jewish Land. He took part in a number of activities in connection with the emigration movement. He organised classes, lectures and exhibitions to give information about opportunities abroad, and also to show the people something of the value of the treasures of the German-Jewish past, to fortify their courage. He applied for and received authority to establish an examination centre in the Philanthropin for the Cambridge University Local Examinations Board.

In 1937 Driesen reached the retiring age of 62. Shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War he left for France. No more was heard of him.

Under the Hitler Régime

Dr. Albert Hirsch, who succeeded Dr. Driesen as Director of the Philanthropin, had joined the school in 1934, after the Nazis suspended him from his post at the *Woehler Realgymnasium* in Frankfurt. Born in Frankfurt in 1888 he studied at the Goethe Gymnasium and at Munich University. He had written a number of school text-books, and had collaborated in a new edition of Lessing's works.

The school had grown in numbers since the Hitler régime. Children who were expelled from the general schools were sent to the Philanthropin, not only from Frankfurt but from all over Germany. The number of pupils increased to about 1,400. In 1938 there were still about 600 pupils in the high school alone. The English class for the Cambridge Examination was working and well attended. Two English masters had been engaged. The first examinations were held in December 1938. The usual work in the main school went on just the same. Twelve students matriculated in April 1938, seven with distinction. The blow fell on October 1st, 1938, with a decree depriving the Philanthropin of its recognition as a state school.

The November pogroms a few weeks later showed that there was no longer any future for Jews in Germany. All the male teachers to the age of 60, and a number of students over 16 were sent to Buchenwald. The school carried on as best it could. Gradually, some of the teachers came back from the concentration camp, but they were worn out and ill. Before long two of them, Dr. Henry Philipp and Dr. Ernst Marbach, died.

The last matriculation examinations were held under the supervision of a Government examiner in the spring of 1939. But many children and some of the teachers had emigrated. Dr. Hirsch, the last Director of the Philanthropin, emigrated to England in August 1939. He was Warden for six years at a Birmingham Hostel for refugee boys and a teacher at the King Edward VII High School for Boys. He went to America in 1946, and is now Professor of Foreign Languages and Chairman of the Division of Languages and Literature at Buena Vista College, Stone Lake, Iowa.

There is no reliable information about the Philanthropin after the outbreak of the war. In the early part of 1939 it still had about 700 pupils, boys and girls, in both high schools and in the elementary school. Dr. Hermann Freudenberger took charge after Dr. Hirsch left. There is in existence a document dated February 28th, 1941 signed by Dr. Freudenberger as Leader of the High School of the Philanthropin.

That year, part of the building, consisting of four classrooms, was requisitioned as a Hospital. Many children in the elementary school were moved to the Röderbergweg Orphanage, but some were left in the school. A letter of the same date, February 28th, 1941, which has been preserved is addressed by Mr. Spier, the Director of the elementary school, to the Lord Mayor of Frankfurt; it asked for protection for the children attending the Philanthropin from molestation by groups of youth who had occupied all the school entrances.

In June 1942, the Minister of Education issued a decree: 'In view of the final expulsion of the Jews, all Jewish schools will close on June 30th, 1942. After July 1st, 1942 all forms of schooling for Jewish children, paid or unpaid, are forbidden.'

Apparently all teaching in the Philanthropin had already stopped several weeks before. Mr. Spier died in the concentration camp of Theresienstadt.

After Hitler

The imposing building of the Philanthropin in the Hebelstrasse in Frankfurt still stands. So far there has been no indication whether it may one day be restored to its purpose as a Jewish school.

But in Israel, Rabbi Dr. Max Elk, a former pupil of the Frankfurt Philanthropin, has started in Haifa the Leo Baeck School, which he says will be conducted in the spirit of the Philanthropin. In a letter written in 1958, Dr. Elk tells me: 'The name Philanthropin expressed not only a pedagogic but a human attitude. That is the attitude in which we wish to educate our youth. The Philanthropin transmitted the spiritual values of Europe to its pupils, but at the same time also love and pride for our Jewish past; this synthesis of European spiritual life with the religious and moral values of Judaism is the educational goal before my eyes. That is what under altogether different conditions the Leo Baeck School has made its aim in Israel.'